



**NEW ENGLAND  
COMMON ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

**Released Items  
2006**

**Grade 8  
Writing**

# Writing—Session 1

- ❶ What is the correct form of the underlined words below?

Icebergs is formed when moisture from the ocean rises up into Earth's atmosphere.

- A. were formed
- B. is forming
- C. are formed
- D. were forming

- ❷ Which sentence is punctuated correctly?

- A. "Juan said My family is planning to move at the end of the school year."
- B. Juan said, My family is planning to move at the end of the school year.
- C. Juan said "My family is planning to move at the end of the school year."
- D. Juan said, "My family is planning to move at the end of the school year."

- ❸ How should the underlined word in the sentence below be spelled?

Thank you for your assistence.

- A. assistence
- B. assistience
- C. assistince
- D. assistance

- ❹ What is the **best** way to combine the two sentences below?

The last performers took the stage. The auditorium was two-thirds empty.

- A. When the last performers took the stage, the auditorium was two-thirds empty.
- B. The auditorium was two-thirds empty, the last performers took the stage.
- C. Two-thirds empty was the auditorium when the last performers took the stage.
- D. The last performers took the stage, the auditorium was two-thirds empty.

- 5 Which word in the sentence below should be capitalized?

The citizens of the city of Atlanta and the officials of the zoo in Grant park were all delighted.

- A. citizens
- B. city
- C. officials
- D. park

- 6 Which edit is needed in this sentence?

I noticed that the ropes that attach the hammock to the tree were already wore out.

- A. Change *noticed* to **notice**.
- B. Change *attach* to **attaches**.
- C. Change *already* to **all ready**.
- D. Change *wore* to **worn**.

- 7 Where should a colon (:) be placed in the sentence below?

The planet Jupiter has many unusual features 63 moons, a ring like Saturn's, and a hurricane that has lasted for 400 years.

- A. after *Jupiter*
- B. after *has*
- C. after *features*
- D. after *hurricane*

- 8 Which edit is needed in the sentence below?

Because the gliders didn't have motors, the pilot's main intrest was learning to control a craft while flying.

- A. Change *motors* to **moters**.
- B. Change *main* to **mane**.
- C. Change *intrest* to **interest**.
- D. Change *while* to **wile**.

- 9 Which word in the sentence below should be capitalized?

My aunt called doctor Olson at his office to see if he was leaving in the winter.

- A. aunt
- B. doctor
- C. office
- D. winter

- 10 What is the **best** way to combine the three sentences below?

The Egyptians invented a water clock. The clock was a bowl with a small hole on the bottom. The bowl had markings on the side.

- A. A bowl that had a small hole in the bottom and that had markings on the side was the water clock the Egyptians invented.
- B. Inventing a water clock, the Egyptians had a bowl with a small hole on the bottom that had markings on the side.
- C. The Egyptians invented a water clock, and the clock was a bowl with a small hole on the bottom and it had markings on the side.
- D. The water clock that the Egyptians invented was a bowl with a small hole on the bottom and markings on the side.



**When writing responses to prompts 11, 12, and 13, remember to**

- **read the prompt carefully,**
- **develop a complete response to the prompt,**
- **proofread and edit your writing, and**
- **write only in the space provided.**

Students read a paragraph titled “Ketchup,” and then answered the questions that followed.

Due to copyright restrictions, we are unable to reprint the paragraph in this document. The author asks the reader to imagine his or her reaction if a waiter brought the eighteenth-century version of ketchup to the table. According to the paragraph, ketchup used to include nuts and vegetables rather than tomatoes.

“Ketchup” from *The Kid Who Invented the Trampoline* by Don Wulffson. Published by Dutton Children’s Books. Copyright © 2001 by Don Wulffson.

- 11 Write a paragraph that explains how the author captures the reader’s interest in this introduction. Use details from the introduction to support your response.
- 12 Think about the best book you have ever read or the best movie you have ever seen. Write a paragraph to persuade a friend to read the book or to watch the movie.

*For a class report, a student wrote this fact sheet about the way that useful land turns into desert. Read the fact sheet. Then write a response to the prompt that follows.*

## Deserts

**Definition of desertification:** Process by which land once good for farming or raising animals turns into desert. It is caused by human activities and changes in climate.

### Facts

- soil produces less, loses its covering of plants
- topsoil blown or washed away
- affects large parts of Africa, the United States, Latin America, Europe, and Asia
- affects a billion people in 110 countries worldwide

### Causes

- natural forces such as droughts or even floods
- human activity
- too much farming without care of soil
- too many animals grazing on the land—all plants get eaten and the soil gets packed down too much
- careless irrigation practices wash soil away
- cutting down forests to clear land for farming and for firewood—nothing left to hold soil in place

### Solutions

- planting new trees and shrubs
- more careful irrigation
- rotating crops and taking better care of the soil
- using better grazing practices
- protecting the environment

- 13 Write **one** paragraph of a report on desertification using information from the fact sheet. Your paragraph should describe **either**

- the causes of desertification, or
- the solutions for desertification.

The shaded area of the box shows which part of the report you should write. →

Introduction
Body
Conclusion

## Writing—Session 2

*The narrator of this passage is a student named Marisa. Read the passage and think about Marisa's character traits. Then write a response to the prompt that follows.*

### Drawing Horses

*Cerelle Woods*

I'd give anything to draw horses the way Euphemia Tucker does. She draws them in the margins of spelling tests and on the back of her math homework. They're always running wild and free, their manes swirling over the paper like clouds across the sky.

Euphemia's horses look so real you can almost feel their breath on your face.

Luke Anderson, who sits next to me, says he can't decide whether my horses look more like Great Danes or kitchen tables. He also calls me Messy. I prefer Marisa, which is my real name, to Missy, which is what everyone—except Luke—calls me. If I could draw like Euphemia, I'd sign all my pictures Marisa. Nobody messes with Euphemia's name, not even Luke Anderson.

Today I sharpened my pencil and took a clean sheet of paper out of my desk. Then I closed my eyes and pictured one of Euphemia's perfect horses rearing up and pawing the air with its sharp hooves. I could see it so clearly I was sure I'd be able to draw it this time.

I started with what I do best: a big, billowing mane. Next I roughed in most of the body and drew a long tail streaming out behind. It really wasn't turning out half bad until I got to the front-legs-pawing-the-air part, which looked more like two macaroni noodles with tiny marshmallows for hooves.

I tried again, but the hooves still didn't seem right, and rather than doing them over and over, I erased them and went on to the head. That was when I really ran into trouble.

First I drew some great donkey ears, followed by sheep ears, pig ears, kangaroo ears . . . everything except horse ears. I erased again and again until I had rubbed a hole in the paper. That was when Luke Anderson poked his nose over my shoulder.

"Hey, Messy," he said. "What are you drawing? It looks like a *Trex* with a mohawk."

I scratched a big X through my earless, macaroni-legged horse, wadded it up into a little ball, and stuffed it under the lid of my desk.

I was still upset when I got off the school bus this afternoon. I walked past the neighbors' horses standing in the field next to our house. They've been in that field for as long as I can remember. Their stringy manes never float into the sky. Their ragged old tails hang straight down to the ground, and I've never seen them run. Every few minutes they stamp their feet to knock off the fire ants, which is how I know they're alive.

Euphemia probably has her own herd of wild stallions. I bet they run right past her bedroom window.

I brooded about it all through dinner. After I'd helped clear the dishes, I sat down with a stack of typing paper and a freshly sharpened pencil. Without Luke Anderson there to pester me, I hoped I'd have better luck. I practiced a few horses' heads, trying to get the ears right. Then my mother walked by, carrying a basket of laundry.

"Nice dogs, Missy," she said. "Is that one a German shepherd?"

I slammed my pencil against the table, hard. My dad looked up from his magazine.

"Was it something I said?" Mama asked.

I tossed all the dog heads into the trash and walked outside. The sun had just sunk below the horizon, feathering the whole sky with pink and orange wisps. Everything looked special in that light, even the scraggly horses next door.

I dragged a lawn chair over to the fence and sat down to take a better look at them.

In this passage, Marisa shows several character traits. For example, she is both jealous and determined. Choose **one** of Marisa's character traits, and explain how the author develops that trait.

Use the questions in the box below to organize your writing. You can answer the questions **before** you write to plan your response or **after** you write to check your response. What you write in the **Student Answer Booklet** will be included as part of your score.

14 What is the focus/controlling idea of your response? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15 What are the supporting details/references to text in your response? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

16 What is the conclusion to your response? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**When writing a response to prompt 17, remember to**

- **read the prompt carefully,**
- **develop a complete response to the prompt,**
- **proofread and edit your writing, and**
- **write only in the space provided.**

**17** Choose **one** of Marisa’s character traits, and explain how the author develops that trait.

# Acknowledgments

The New Hampshire, Vermont, and Rhode Island Departments of Education wish to acknowledge and credit the following authors and publishers for use of their work in the writing portion of the *New England Common Assessment Program*—2006.

“Ketchup” (p. 4) from *The Kid Who Invented the Trampoline* by Don Wulffson. Published by Dutton Children’s Books. Copyright © 2001 by Don Wulffson.

“Deserts” (p. 5). Copyright © 2004 by Measured Progress.

“Drawing Horses” (pp. 6–7) by Cerelle Woods as it appeared in *Highlights*, April 2000. Published by Highlights for Children. Copyright © 2000 by Highlights for Children.

## Grade 8 Writing Released Item Information

Released Item Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Content Strand <sup>1</sup>	SC	SC	SC	SC	SC	SC	SC	SC	SC	SC	IR	PW	RW	LR	LR	LR	LR
GLE Code	7-9	7-9	7-9	7-1	7-9	7-9	7-9	7-9	7-9	7-1	7-3	7-8	7-8	7-3	7-3	7-3	7-3
Depth of Knowledge Code	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
Item Type <sup>2</sup>	MC	MC	MC	MC	MC	MC	MC	MC	MC	MC	CR	CR	CR	SA	SA	SA	ER
Answer Key	C	D	D	A	D	D	C	C	B	D							
Total Possible Points	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	4	4	1	1	1	12

<sup>1</sup>Content Strand: SC = Structures of Language & Writing Conventions. Short Responses — IR = Response to Informational Text, PW = Persuasive Writing, RW = Report Writing. Extended Response — LR = Response to Literary Text

<sup>2</sup>Item Type: MC = Multiple Choice, CR = Constructed Response, SA = Short Answer, ER = Writing Prompt





**NEW ENGLAND  
COMMON ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

**Released Items  
Support Materials  
2006**

**Grade 8  
Writing**

**NECAP 2006 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING**

**7.9.1 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by applying rules of standard English usage to correct grammatical errors**

- 1** What is the correct form of the underlined words below?

Icebergs is formed when moisture from the ocean rises up into Earth's atmosphere.

- A. were formed
- B. is forming
- C. are formed
- D. were forming

**7.9.4 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by applying appropriate punctuation to various sentence patterns to enhance meaning**

- 2** Which sentence is punctuated correctly?
- A. "Juan said My family is planning to move at the end of the school year."
  - B. Juan said, My family is planning to move at the end of the school year.
  - C. Juan said "My family is planning to move at the end of the school year."
  - D. Juan said, "My family is planning to move at the end of the school year."

**NECAP 2006 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING**

**7.9.5 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by correctly spelling grade-appropriate, high-frequency words and applying conventional spelling patterns/rules**

- 3** How should the underlined word in the sentence below be spelled?

Thank you for your assitence.

- A. assittence
- B. assistience
- C. assistince
- D. assistance

**7.1.1 Students demonstrate command of the structures of sentences, paragraphs, and text by using varied sentence length and structure to enhance meaning (e.g., including phrases and clauses)**

- 4** What is the **best** way to combine the two sentences below?

The last performers took the stage. The auditorium was two-thirds empty.

- A. When the last performers took the stage, the auditorium was two-thirds empty.
- B. The auditorium was two-thirds empty, the last performers took the stage.
- C. Two-thirds empty was the auditorium when the last performers took the stage.
- D. The last performers took the stage, the auditorium was two-thirds empty.

NECAP 2006 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

**7.9.2 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by applying capitalization rules**

- 5** Which word in the sentence below should be capitalized?

The citizens of the city of Atlanta and the officials of the zoo in Grant park were all delighted.

- A. citizens
- B. city
- C. officials
- D. park

**7.9.1 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by applying rules of standard English usage to correct grammatical errors**

- 6** Which edit is needed in this sentence?

I noticed that the ropes that attach the hammock to the tree were already wore out.

- A. Change *noticed* to **notice**.
- B. Change *attach* to **attaches**.
- C. Change *already* to **all ready**.
- D. Change *wore* to **worn**.

NECAP 2006 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

**7.9.4** In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by applying appropriate punctuation to various sentence patterns to enhance meaning

- 7** Where should a colon (:) be placed in the sentence below?

The planet Jupiter has many unusual features 63 moons, a ring like Saturn's, and a hurricane that has lasted for 400 years.

- A. after *Jupiter*
- B. after *has*
- C. after *features*
- D. after *hurricane*

**7.9.5** In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by correctly spelling grade-appropriate, high-frequency words and applying conventional spelling patterns/rules

- 8** Which edit is needed in the sentence below?

Because the gliders didn't have motors, the pilot's main intrest was learning to control a craft while flying.

- A. Change *motors* to **moters**.
- B. Change *main* to **mane**.
- C. Change *intrest* to **interest**.
- D. Change *while* to **wile**.

**NECAP 2006 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING**

**7.9.2 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by applying capitalization rules**

- 9** Which word in the sentence below should be capitalized?

My aunt called doctor Olson at his office to see if he was leaving in the winter.

- A. aunt
- B. doctor
- C. office
- D. winter

**NECAP 2006 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING**

**7.1.1 Students demonstrate command of the structures of sentences, paragraphs, and text by using varied sentence length and structure to enhance meaning (e.g., including phrases and clauses)**

- 10** What is the **best** way to combine the three sentences below?

The Egyptians invented a water clock. The clock was a bowl with a small hole on the bottom. The bowl had markings on the side.

- A. A bowl that had a small hole in the bottom and that had markings on the side was the water clock the Egyptians invented.
- B. Inventing a water clock, the Egyptians had a bowl with a small hole on the bottom that had markings on the side.
- C. The Egyptians invented a water clock, and the clock was a bowl with a small hole on the bottom and it had markings on the side.
- D. The water clock that the Egyptians invented was a bowl with a small hole on the bottom and markings on the side.

## Ketchup

### Writing in Response to Informational Text

**7.3.2 In response to literary or informational text, students make and support analytical judgments about text by...making inferences about the relationship(s) among content, events, characters, setting, theme, or author's craft.**

- 11** Write a paragraph that explains how the author captures the reader's interest in this introduction. Use details from the introduction to support your response.

#### Scoring Guide:

Score	Description
4	Response provides a clear explanation of how the author captures the reader's interest in the introduction. The paragraph maintains a focus/purpose throughout, includes relevant supporting details, and is well-organized.
3	Response provides a general explanation of how the author captures the reader's interest in the introduction. The paragraph maintains the focus/purpose, but there may be minor lapses. The response includes some supporting details and is generally well-organized.
2	Response is an attempt at a paragraph that provides an explanation of how the author captures the reader's interest in the introduction. The response contains major lapses in focus/purpose and/or few relevant supporting details from the text.
1	Response may be unclear and/or a minimal attempt to explain how the author captures the reader's interest in the introduction.
0	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.
Blank	No response

#### Scoring Notes

Possible methods for capturing the reader's interest:

- The author uses the second person "you" to personalize the episode for the reader.
- The description of the ketchup as green and brown paste will get the reader's attention.
- The ingredient list will likely interest the reader.
- The author uses a situation most readers can relate to: asking for ketchup.
- The author uses colorful words and phrases like "lunatic" and "weirdly."



SCORE POINT 4

11

The author captures the readers attention in this introduction by putting you in a situation of being at a restaurant and asking for ketchup. Most people can relate to it. Then by saying "You stare at the bottle, then open it up - and decide the waiter is either a lunatic or has a really sick sense of humor." It makes the reader wonder why and makes them want to keep reading to find out. By finding out ketchup made in eighteenth-century Europe and America was made of squished cucumbers, walnuts, and mushrooms you would want to read the rest.

SCORE POINT 3

11

The author of the article, Ketchup, captures the reader's interest by using details in a humorous way. His description of the Ketchup gives the reader a vivid picture in their mind of this sick substance. It really gets the reader thinking about how people in the eighteenth century could stand to eat their version of Ketchup.

SCORE POINT 2

11

The author tries to make the reader feel like is there. He wants the reader to be disgusted by the green paste called Ketchup. And by having the reader picture himself there, he therefor captures the readers interest.

SCORE POINT 1

11

He Starts it off by saying "your" the reader reading it makes it feel like you are the person at the restrarant.

SCORE POINT 0

11

I do not like ketchup becuse it has turnatos in it. I do not like turnatos. Ketchup is very nasty. I am the eiley one in my famly tha duze not like ketchup, and I do not like the culer red.

**NECAP 2006 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING**

**Informational Writing (Persuasive Writing)**

**7.8.2** In informational writing, students demonstrate use of a range of elaboration strategies by ... including facts and details relevant to focus/controlling idea, and excluding extraneous information.

- 12** Think about the best book you have ever read or the best movie you have ever seen. Write a paragraph to persuade a friend to read the book or to watch the movie.

**Scoring Guide:**

<b>Score</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>4</b>	Response includes an attempt to persuade the reader to read a favorite book or watch a favorite movie. The paragraph contains a relevant focus/controlling idea and details that support the focus.
<b>3</b>	Response includes an attempt to persuade the reader to read a favorite book or watch a favorite movie. The paragraph contains a relevant focus/controlling idea and appropriate details. There may be minor lapses in focus and/or details that lack development or specificity.
<b>2</b>	Response is an attempt at a paragraph that persuades the reader to read a favorite book or watch a favorite movie. There may be lapses in focus (i.e., the argument is unclear).
<b>1</b>	Response is undeveloped or contains an unclear focus (i.e., there is little evidence of an argument).
<b>0</b>	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.
<b>Blank</b>	No response

SCORE POINT 4

12

"Saving Privat Ryan" is not only a great movie because it is very informative about World War Two, but it also gives insight to the camraderie that is so deep, only war heros seem to have it. In times of war, when a man would risk his life to save yours, a very special bond is created between the two men, and "Saving Private Ryan" depicts this type of bond very well.

It is also a movie with a very good plot, has a lot of great action, and my friend, the last reason I think you should see this movie is because it holds meaning for us today because it helps us appreciate our fallen soldiers.

SCORE POINT 3

12

To my friend D..., the best movie I've watched would probably be "You Not Served." You should watch this movie because it shows a lot of dancing when you would probably like. It also shows how friendship should be. No matter how one can get mad at each other, true friends will always stay together. The music and actions this movie shows will make you not want it to end because of the dancing. It would probably make you want to dance too. Therefore you should watch this movie.

SCORE POINT 2

- 12 The best movie I've ever seen would definitely have to be Troy. It was such an awesome movie! I would recommend it to anyone who likes a lot of action a little romance and a great plot. It's one of those movies you pray they'll make a sequel to. That how good it was. It was simply an adventure to watch. Simply spectacular. If you're looking for an amazing movie Troy is for you!

SCORE POINT 1

- 12 Hatchet, it's the best book and movie you will ever see. Go to the library and read it. It's by Gary Paulsen. After you read the book then watch the movie. It's great and I think you'll love them.

NECAP 2006 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING

SCORE POINT 0

12

I really dont read much but I know movies. I couldn't really tell you my favorite but it depends on what kind of movies you like,



## Deserts

### Informational Writing (Reports)

**7.8.2** In informational writing, students demonstrate use of a range of elaboration strategies by ... including facts and details relevant to focus/controlling idea, and excluding extraneous information.

- 13** Write **one** paragraph of a report on desertification using information from the fact sheet. Your paragraph should describe **either**

- the causes of desertification, or
- the solutions for desertification.

The shaded area of the box shows which part of the report you should write. →

Introduction
Body
Conclusion

#### Scoring Guide:

Score	Description
4	Response provides a paragraph that describes either the causes of desertification or solutions for desertification. The paragraph contains a clearly stated focus/controlling idea, which is maintained throughout the paragraph. The paragraph includes only relevant facts from the list. The response is well-organized.
3	Response provides a paragraph that describes either the causes of desertification or solutions for desertification. The paragraph contains a focus/controlling idea but there may be minor lapses in focus. The paragraph includes mostly relevant facts from the list. The paragraph is generally well-organized.
2	Response is an attempt at a paragraph that describes either the causes of desertification or solutions for desertification. The paragraph may lack a consistent focus. The paragraph includes some relevant facts from the list.
1	Response is undeveloped or contains an unclear focus. There is little evidence of logical organization.
0	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.
Blank	No response

SCORE POINT 4

13

There are a lot of things that cause desertification. Some of them are natural, like Flash Floods or droughts. Most of the causes, though, are done by humans. Too much human activity, like Farming without caring for the soil, can cause an area of land to turn into a desert. Careless irrigation can cause soil to wash away, creating deserts. Also, when too many animals graze, they pack down the soil and eat a good part of the vegetation. Another big cause of desertification is cutting down forests to clear land for farming, or to use as fire wood. There is nothing left to hold the soil, so it all washes away. Desertification is happening all over the world, and we are, in part, the ones causing it.

SCORE POINT 3

13

Ways to stop making deserts are easy. If you have an area that looks like a desert, you could plant trees there. You could also be more careful about irrigation. If you already have crops there, rotate them and take better care of the soil. You could also use better grazing techniques if you have animals on the land. You can also take better care of the land by protecting the environment. You can do that by not cutting down the trees you plant and letting the soil wash away.

SCORE POINT 2

13

I am going to write about the solutions for desertification. I really do think that more people should take better care of the earth. For example I think more people should go places and plant more flowers or shrubs. I also think that the farmers and homeowners should take better care of their properties. So basically people should help the earth.

SCORE POINT 1

13

The Resin for this is  
Because wen people  
cut dawn trees the  
soil gets no good  
thats why on farm  
Land thars not  
many trees.

SCORE POINT 0

13

I think the report is very  
good except it should be in  
story form, I didnt know some  
of the stuff on that,  
and it just might expire me  
to do some research.

## Drawing Horses

### Writing in Response to Literary Text

In this passage, Marisa shows several character traits. For example, she is both jealous and determined. Choose **one** of Marisa's character traits, and explain how the author develops that trait.

- 14 What is the focus/controlling idea of your response?

#### Scoring Guide:

Score	Description
1	Response contains an appropriate focus/controlling idea related to the prompt. The focus/controlling idea may or may not be developed in the response.
0	Response is totally irrelevant.
Blank	No response

- 15 What are the supporting details/references to text in your response?

#### Scoring Guide:

Score	Description
1	Response contains appropriate supporting details/text references related to the prompt. These supporting details/references may or may not appear in the text, as long as they are a logical extension of the ideas presented. The supporting details/references may or may not be used in the response.
0	Response is totally irrelevant.
Blank	No response

## Drawing Horses

### Writing in Response to Literary Text

- 16 What is the conclusion to your response?

**Scoring Guide:**

Score	Description
1	Response contains an appropriate conclusion related to the prompt. The conclusion may or may not be used in the response.
0	Response is totally irrelevant.
Blank	No response

**7.3.2 In response to literary or informational text, students make and support analytical judgments about text by...making inferences about the relationship(s) among content, events, characters, setting, theme, or author's craft.**

- 17 Choose **one** of Marisa's character traits, and explain how the author develops that trait.

**NECAP 2006 RELEASED ITEMS  
GRADE 8 WRITING**

**Scoring Guide:**

<b>Score</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose is clear throughout; strong focus/controlling idea OR strongly stated purpose focuses the writing</li> <li>• Intentionally organized for effect</li> <li>• Fully developed details, rich and/or insightful elaboration supports purpose</li> <li>• Distinctive voice, tone, and style enhance meaning</li> <li>• Consistent application of the rules of grade-level grammar, usage, and mechanics</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose is clear; focus/controlling idea is maintained throughout</li> <li>• Well-organized and coherent throughout</li> <li>• Details are relevant and support purpose; details are sufficiently elaborated</li> <li>• Strong command of sentence structure; uses language to enhance meaning</li> <li>• Consistent application of the rules of grade-level grammar, usage, and mechanics</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose is evident; focus/controlling idea may not be maintained</li> <li>• Generally organized and coherent</li> <li>• Details are relevant and mostly support purpose</li> <li>• Well-constructed sentences; uses language well</li> <li>• May show inconsistent control of grade-level grammar, usage, and mechanics</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing has a general purpose</li> <li>• Some sense of organization; may have lapses in coherence</li> <li>• Some relevant details support purpose</li> <li>• Uses language adequately; may show little variety of sentence structures</li> <li>• May contain some serious errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attempted or vague purpose; stays on topic; little evidence of organization; lapses in coherence</li> <li>• Generalizes or lists details</li> <li>• Lacks sentence control; uses language poorly</li> <li>• Errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics are distracting</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of evident purpose; topic may not be clear</li> <li>• Incoherent or undeveloped organization</li> <li>• Random information</li> <li>• Rudimentary or deficient use of language</li> <li>• Serious and persistent errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics throughout</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.
<b>Blank</b>	No response



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SCORE POINT 1

- 14 The focus of response is Marisa's determination to draw a horse as well as Euphemia Tucker does.

SCORE POINT 1

- 15 Some supporting details from text: "I'd give anything to draw horses the way Euphemia Tucker does." "I tried again, but the hooves still didn't seem right, and rather than doing them over and over, I erased them and went to the head."

SCORE POINT 1

- 16 Marisa's determination might someday lead her, to perfecting the drawing of a horse.

SCORE POINT 6

- 17 During the short story "Drawing Horses" the main character Marisa, is determined to draw a horse, the way her classmate Euphemia Tucker does. Marisa even stated, "I'd give anything to draw horses the way Euphemia Tucker does." Marisa attempted to draw a horse many times throughout the story, but she was always distracted by her classmate Luke Anderson, making fun of her drawing. For example, "What are you drawing? It looks like a T.rex with a mohawk." Marisa was

also angry when her mother confused the horse she was drawing, for a German shepherd dog. It seems that the more Marisa was tormented by her peers and family, the more she wanted to draw a horse perfectly, to prove everyone wrong. The author was trying to show Marisa's constant "pull" to meet her goal by drawing a horse like Euphemia Tucker.

At the end of the passage, after Marisa's mother mistook her picture of a horse for a German shepherd, Marisa sat outside, to get a better look at her neighbors horses. This is another example of Marisa's drive to achieve the goal of drawing a horse. However, when Marisa was looking at these horses, she did not have the same goal anymore. I think Marisa finally realized that she did not need to draw a horse just like Euphemia; Marisa needed to look at the horses herself and draw them as they look through her eyes. During Marisa's attempted drawing sessions, she was so focused on drawing a horse like Euphemia, that it did

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not occur to her to draw a real horse, as they look through her eyes. When Marisa dragged a lawn chair outside to get a better look at the horses, she could really take in the physical features and grace of these creatures.

Marisa's determination might lead her to perfecting a drawing of a horse; not perfecting a drawing of a horse illustrated by Euphemia Tucker.

- Writing has a clear purpose and focus with control of ideas throughout.
- Writing is organized and coherent.
- Writing includes supporting details with sufficient elaboration.

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SCORE POINT 1

- 14 The focus/Controlling idea of my response is that the author developed the character trait of being jealous.

SCORE POINT 1

- 15 Supporting details/references to text in my response is that Marissa is very jealous of Euphemie Tucker who is excellent at drawing horses. Also every time Marissa tries to anyone that sees it says it looks like the complete opposite, without knowing.

SCORE POINT 1

- 16 The conclusion of my response is that the author develops the trait in many ways and one was expanding.

SCORE POINT 5

- 17 Jealousy, one of the key traits of Marissa in the passage "Drawing Horses," was developed by the author very well. For example the first sentence from the text was, "I'd give anything to draw horses the way Euphemie Tucker does. (pg. 6)" This first sentence develops Marissa's trait of jealousy very well because it develops a focus and tells you exactly what the story is going to be about. Another way that the author developed Marissa's jealousy trait was by expanding on the idea and having conflict between her and the drawings of horses. One of

these conflicts is between her and a boy in her class which always makes fun of her drawing of horses and says they either look like T.Rex, a German shepherd, or a table. This makes Marissa feel down and not as confident with her drawings of the horses. Another conflict is between her and her mother. The conflict is when drawing horses at her kitchen table her mother walked by and said "Nice dogs, Missy, is that one a German shepherd? (Pg 9)". Her mother says this without knowing what Marissa is really trying to draw. This comment put Marissa over the top and she got very mad and walked out. Adding conflict into this story made the author develop Marissa's trait of Jealousy. Wanting to draw like Euphemie Tucker must be tough because the way it described the horses moving free and wildly across the field would make jealousy creep into Marissa even more. This was a good way of expanding by the author. These are the ways the author develops Marissa's trait of jealousy in great detail and by expanding

- Writing has a clear purpose and focus with control of ideas throughout.
- Writing is organized and coherent.
- Writing has some supporting details.

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SCORE POINT 1

- 14 The controlling idea for my response is going to be her determination.

SCORE POINT 1

- 15 Supporting details for my response are: that even though Luke makes fun of her name and her horses she tries again, also when she goes home she tries, but fails again, after dinner she tries but still can't do it, so she studies the neighbor's horses.

SCORE POINT 1

- 16 My conclusion is that everyone needs determination to succeed.

SCORE POINT 4

- 17 The author takes Marisa's trait of determination and really builds it up. When she tries to draw her horses at school Luke Anderson makes fun of her and calls her Messy. But even though she can't draw them yet her determination pushes her to try, and so she does when she gets home. Even though Marisa practices and practices she still can't draw her wild and free horses. After dinner her determination to draw beautiful horses

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kicks in again. She tries to get life into her pictures but still they come out looking like dogs. When her mother comments about them she storms out. But even though she stopped drawing her mind is set on horses so she goes and studies the neighbors for hints of how to draw.

In conclusion, I think everyone needs determination to succeed at something. People need as much determination as Marisa instead of just giving up.

- Writing has a general purpose with attempted focus.
- Writing has some organization.
- Writing has some supporting details.

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SCORE POINT 1

- 14 My controlling idea for my response is when everyone kept saying Marisa's drawing looked like dogs or other animals.

SCORE POINT 1

- 15 -Luke said they looked like T-rex, dog, table  
Tom said looked like dog  
-she was trying her hardest

SCORE POINT 1

- 16 I think Marisa felt hurt.

SCORE POINT 3

- 17 I think one of Marisa's character traits is that she is hurt. I think she is hurt because she is trying really hard to draw horses but people think she is trying to draw a dog. It doesn't help either that Luke Anderson keeps telling her that, he even went as far to say that it looks like a table or even a t-rex.
- Marisa also has to face Euphemia Tucker a girl who can draw perfect horses running through a field. In the story she compares herself to Euphemia. When she thinks about how much better her horses are it just makes her feel sad or hurt. Also



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Luke Anderson makes fun of Marsia but doesn't make fun of Euphemia because she can draw horses. I think throughout the whole story Marsia feels hurt.

- Writing has a general purpose with attempted focus.
- Writing has some organization.
- Writing has appropriate word choice and some control of sentence structure.

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SCORE POINT 1

14

The focus of my response  
is Jealousy

SCORE POINT 1

15

Euphemia can draw, no one messes  
with her name, Perfect horses

SCORE POINT 1

16

Maybe someday after Marissa  
looks at them later she will draw them

SCORE POINT 2

17

One trait Marissa has is  
jealousy. The author develops this  
trait clearly. By making people  
have better things than Marissa, makes  
her want what she doesn't have. By  
doing this Marissa is jealous.  
Euphemia can draw beautiful horses,  
Marissa wishes she could draw such  
lovely things. Everyone calls her  
Missy instead of her real name.  
Marissa is convinced that if

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She could draw like  
Euphemis that no one would  
call her missy anymore because  
she would sign her real name.

- Writing has a general purpose with attempted focus.
- Writing has lapses in organization or coherence, which may interfere with understanding.
- Writing has appropriate word choice and some control of sentence structure.

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SCORE POINT 1

14

She is impatient.

SCORE POINT 1

15

Stuffed a ball into her desk.  
Scribbled on it  
Slammed pencil hard

SCORE POINT 0

16

SCORE POINT 1

17

Marisa is impatient. When she was  
mad she slammed her pencil on the desk  
and scribbled on the paper and stuffed  
in her desk.

She got mad when some one called  
her horses a T-Rex with a mohawk.

- Writing lacks evident purpose or focus.
- Writing has minimal or random details.

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SCORE POINT 0

14

SCORE POINT 0

15

SCORE POINT 0

16

SCORE POINT 0

17

Because student responses to this item included only a minimal number of zeros, an appropriate sample response was not located.